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THE MINISTERIAL CHANGE

On Sunday morning March 8th the journals of the city announced the resignation of the ministry of Jan. 5th. Speculation is busy in many places, and various causes are assigned for what must, after all, be called a sudden event. The well-informed, however, know that it was due to the personal scruples of Councillor Sinimbu with reference to the question of a dissolution of the chambers which brought on the result. The prime minister, as is well known, has always maintained that electoral reform should only be effected by an amendment to the constitution, notwithstanding the opinion of many eminent men in the liberal party that it could be achieved by an ordinary law. There were members, also of the ministry, who maintained this view, and since they had not been compromised by public utterances, as the premier had been, might easily have undertaken the formation of a new ministry to secure the reform by an ordinary law. Still with praiseworthy loyalty to their chief, they preferred to accompany him in his retirement from power.

Councillor Sinimbu came into power Jan. 5th, 1878, at a critical period in the history of the empire. He found a depleted treasury, a declining income from all sources, and a famine devastating the northern provinces.

He chose for his minister of finance a man of undoubted ability, excellent character, and radical liberal opinions; but of no previous financial experience. His first essays were productive of great harm to the country's interests at home and abroad, and his persistence in the advocacy of the most liberal opinions gave his colleagues a pretext to compel his retirement from the cabinet.

In the appointment of his successor the ministry gained an active defender in the chambers—a position made necessary since the former finance minister had marshalled his forces in opposition—but in his administration of the treasury and his callow endeavors to increase the revenue by onerous and annoying taxes, he rendered himself less acceptable than his predecessor.

Councillor Sinimbu, having determined upon a system of relief to meet the sufferings of his countrymen in the northern provinces, and having projected three rail-ways, the building of which was an integral part of his plan, determined on taking the portfolio of agriculture and public works. At the head of this department it is conceded, even by the opposition, that he acquitted himself with credit and ability.

For the most part the remainder of the portfolios were given to men of average character and ability who honestly made every effort to reduce expenditures and administer their departments economically.

It was in the political phases of the ministry's career that it met with the fiercest opposition from a minority in the lower chamber, which, at the beginning, was composed exclusively of its political friends. The fixed and persistent conservative majority in the Senate compelled Councillor Sinimbu to modify his liberal measures to make them acceptable to this body, and thus he drew out the unsparring criticism of his radical friends in the lower house.

The prime minister retires with the personal respect of the best men of both parties. All conceding that he has borne himself in the trying ordeal with great composure and dignity and that he will hand over to the government with his successor with a consciousness of duty well performed.

The Visconde de Abaeté, who, between the years 1835 and 1858, had, at different times, held nearly every portfolio in the cabinet, was first called by the Emperor to undertake the organization of the new ministry. Some surprise was expressed at the selection, but when it was known that he had spoken in council in the most decided manner regarding the question which caused the resignation of Councillor Sinimbu, it appeared to be logical enough. The

venerable senator, however, declined the honor, and Councillor José Antonio Sampaiva was then invited to form a ministry, and accepted.

Councillor Sampaiva has previously held the cabinet positions of minister of empire, marine, and war, and is a statesman of eminence and experience—the leader of the liberal party in Bahia, which province he represents in the Senate—and a man of unblemished character and reputation. It is presumed that Councillor Diniz will be offered the portfolio of agriculture.

A WELL-EARNED RECOGNITION

It is with the greatest pleasure we publish the following well deserved recognition on the part of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society of the great service rendered to the country and to humanity by Deputy Joaquim Nabuco. Mr. Nabuco stands today, young as he is, the representative of the soundest ideas, and the best sentiments, and is of the broadest minded and best educated of the rising statesmen of Brazil. He has had the courage and manhood to be thoroughly independent and to follow the inspirations of his own nature and his own convictions, rather than identify himself with any party for mere political purposes. To such men Brazil owes more of her high standing abroad than to any cabinet either liberal or conservative.

British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society,
Office 55 New Broad Street, E.C.4,
London, January 8, 1880.

To Senhor Joaquim Nabuco,
Dear Sir,

I have much pleasure in handing you the following copy of a Minute passed by the Committee of the Society: "The Committee of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society desire to place upon record their sense of the great services rendered by Senhor Joaquim Nabuco to the cause of freedom, by the constant and untiring devotion with which he has laboured to procure the carrying out of justice towards the unfortunate Catta Branca blacks so long held in illegal slavery by the São João d'El Rey Mining Co. The committee have seen with pleasure the decree passed by the Juiz de Direita of the Rio das Velhas district by which the Catta Branca blacks are now declared to be free—their freedom dating from 1860 and their wages to be allowed from that date. This decree the Committee trust to see carried out in its entirety without delay; but meanwhile they hasten to express to Senhor Nabuco the deep sense they entertain of the manner in which he has contributed towards the end now attained; and on behalf of all the suffering slaves they offer him their sincere thanks. They also, at the same time, wish to record their sense of the services he has rendered to the cause of humanity by his vigorous attack on the policy of the Brazilian government in their endeavour to introduce Chinese Coolie labor, under indenture, into Brazil. The Committee hold the opinion that this is but another name for slavery and they trust that Senhor Nabuco will continue to oppose the introduction of so nefarious a measure; and that his efforts, in this respect also, will be crowned with success.

With the expression of my high regard,
I am, Dear Sir,

Yours very sincerely,
(Signed) CHARLES H. ALLEN,
Secretary.

AN INTER-CONTINENTAL RAILWAY

The following extracts from a letter addressed to some prominent business men of St. Louis, United States, by Hinton Rowan Helper, Esq., concerning the construction of an inter-continental railway, will be read with interest. Although the project may seem visionary and impracticable it should be remembered that there are many other great works now in existence which seemed equally impracticable at their conception. Even though the enterprise may be years ahead of its time, it is certainly worthy of a thoughtful and respectful consideration.

The occasion of my presuming to address to you this communication is what I have myself long regarded as a perfectly practicable enterprise, of unequalled magnitude and transcendent importance, to which

through your own able and honorable services, as a committee of three men, I now desire to enlist at once the attention and active co-operation of the multitudinous peoples of three Americas. The object thus aimed at is nothing less than the earliest possible construction of a longitudinal midland double track steel railway, from a point high north in North America, running more or less southwardly through Mexico and Central America, to a point far south in South America; looking ultimately to such needs as gradual extensions at either end, from time to time, as will eventually place Behring Strait and Cape Horn, and all the intermediate localities, in uninterrupted and continuous overland communication by steam and by telegraph.

My views on this subject will appear somewhat elaborately in a book, not wholly devoted to this scheme, however, which I intend to publish in the course of the next two or three months; and in order to prove conclusively my own earnestness and confidence in the matter, I herewith inclose a certificate of deposit for \$5,000 in the Bank of Commerce of St. Louis, payable to your joint order, or to the order of any two of you, on the first day of December of next year, 1880; the said money to be then expended by you in obtaining five of the most convincing and meritorious essays which may be offered meanwhile, three in prose and two in poetry, in truthful and vigorous and effective advocacy of the undertaking.

It is hoped that such an intense earnestness and enthusiasm may be awakened throughout all the countries from Alaska to Patagonia, inclusive, as will lead to the granting of all the requisite governmental guarantees and privileges and charters, by or before the 14th of October 1882, so that the vast enterprise may be actually begun not later than that day; and that at least 150,000 strong-armed and cheerful-hearted laborers may soon afterward be given work on the various sections of the line, and, by fair wages and just treatment, induced to continue their wealth-creating and civilizing exertions, without any unusual interruption, until the whole undertaking, in its longest and broadest and best conceptions, shall be substantially and gloriously finished for all future ages. Seven years at most ought to suffice for the completion of this grandest and best of all the grand and good highways of the New World. The lapse of that period will find us facing the 14th of October, 1889. Three years later will take us to the 400th anniversary of the discovery of America. Let us be prepared to mark and honor that anniversary—a veritable index to one of the most conspicuous and momentous epochs in human affairs—let no welcome and signalize that superlative anniversary in St. Louis, by holding here at that time, the largest and most splendid and imposing world's fair that has ever been held on the earth; an exhibition at which shall be specially and fully represented the people, the products, the fauna, the flora, and the minerals, of every American nation between the Arctic and Antarctic seas and the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

Well constructed and wisely managed, and fully protected by national and international compacts, from the dangers of undue interference by revolutionary factions, this road of roads, this great Northern and Southern backbone, from which Eastern and Western ribs will eventually radiate by scores and by hundreds, conveying an exuberance of new life and energy and hope and blessing to tens of millions of happy human beings, ought in time to be worth \$3,000,000,000 to North America, the same amount to South America, and \$1,500,000,000, more or less, to Mexico and Central America. Of these vast valuations and earnings, St. Louis and other portions of Missouri ought to be the recipients; for, first to last, of \$100,000,000 or more; but these mere pecuniary estimates are mediocrities of only a material part of the advantages which may be fairly expected to flow from the colossal enterprise after it shall have been perfected. Every intellectual, moral, social, civil, political and industrial interest of mankind will be advanced; and, as an inevitable and delightful result of the aesthetic culture which will prevail, the most simple and unaffected amenities, elegancies, refinements and purities of life will everywhere increase and abound.

IGNORANCE REGARDING MACHINERY

The general ignorance regarding machinery is surprising when it is considered that machines, in some form or another, enter so largely into the economies of our daily life. The Boston Journal of Commerce thinks that newspaper men are especially open to

this charge of ignorance, which in their case is the less excusable, as they are expected to "know something about everything." When such mechanical appliances and chemical operations are combined, as in the experiments of Edison, perhaps a lack of definite knowledge may be overlooked; for only a comparatively few specialists are introduced into our every-day life. But the steam engine—its office and work, and its session for generations, and the ordinary tools of the mechanic—the lathe, planer, screw-cutting machines, and other common appliances—are to be seen everywhere, and ought to be familiar to all. Yet the newspaper notices of machinery and tools are seldom correct unless written by a practical mechanic, and sometimes are laughable from their absurdity. A short time ago, in a notice of the dismantling of a locomotive by the breaking of a connecting bar between the drivers, it was stated that the piston rod broke, and the end, falling to the ground, lifted the engine from the track! Another account told of the breaking of "the crank of the truck." I lately we had an account of the "explosion of a steamboat's chimney," and "explosions of engines" are frequently mentioned. One account of a boiler explosion that tore the boiler house and engine room to pieces, gave as a reason why the engine was comparatively uninjured that the engine was not running at the time! The bursting of a fly wheel by the breaking of the governor belt, which stopped it, and allowed the full pressure from the boiler to enter the cylinder unchecked, was accounted for by the too rapid velocity of the governor! The collapse of a fine was called the "bursting of the crown sheet," and the worst explosion of all was the "explosion of a rivet." A notice was recently made of the cracking of the walking beam of a large engine, and the statement was made that the works would stop until a new "shaft" could be cast. A notice of a new marine engine stated that the piston rod ran in ball-thrust bearings—attending probably to the thrust bearing of the propeller shaft! A description of a large boring lathe conveyed the information that the live cone ran in "mated boxes," meaning, evidently, that the live or head arbor ran in lathe metal boxes. A new planer was described as having "ways that run on V frames;" and a screw machine which made machine screws from lars was credited with "threading the heads of the screws," and that process was described as done after the screw was cut off the bar. "A solution of bicarbonate of soda," was employed on the screw-cutting tool.

These inaccuracies are in some cases inexcusable, but, in most, a superficial knowledge of a machine, or a smattering of natural philosophy found in common school text books, would have prevented errors so gross as to raise the laugh of ridicule.—Scientific American.

THE "CIRCASSIAN" CLAIM

On January 19, a bill (S. 1,061) was presented to the United States Senate and referred to the committee on foreign relations, asking that the President of the United States be requested to call upon the government of Brazil to make payment of \$12,000,000, with interest at 6 1/2% from December 18, 1867, damages sustained in consequence of the violation of a contract entered into by the government of Brazil with Mr. Ernest M. Fieller.

When Mr. Quintino Bocayuva was in the United States as Brazilian commissioner to promote emigration to Brazil, the steamer *Circassian* was chartered (Aug. 21, 1867), to go to New Orleans and there prepare to take on board and carry to Brazil a large number of emigrants. The owners sent the steamer to New Orleans, prepared her for the reception of the passengers at considerable expense and she remained at the dock the stipulated number of "lay days," when, no passengers presenting themselves, a claim was made for the usual forfeit. Up to this date the claim has not been recognized by the Brazilian government. Its validity turns on the point whether Mr. Bocayuva was the agent of the government of Brazil. A letter from the Brazilian legation at Washington assured the owners that any contract made with Mr. Bocayuva would be valid as to the Brazilian government.

The population of Chile, according to the census of 1875, was 2,608,424, which does not include 26,328 foreigners and about 44,000 Indians. In 1865 the population was 1,819,223.

